

C
B67K

Bowdoin College Bulletin

Number 105

October, 1920

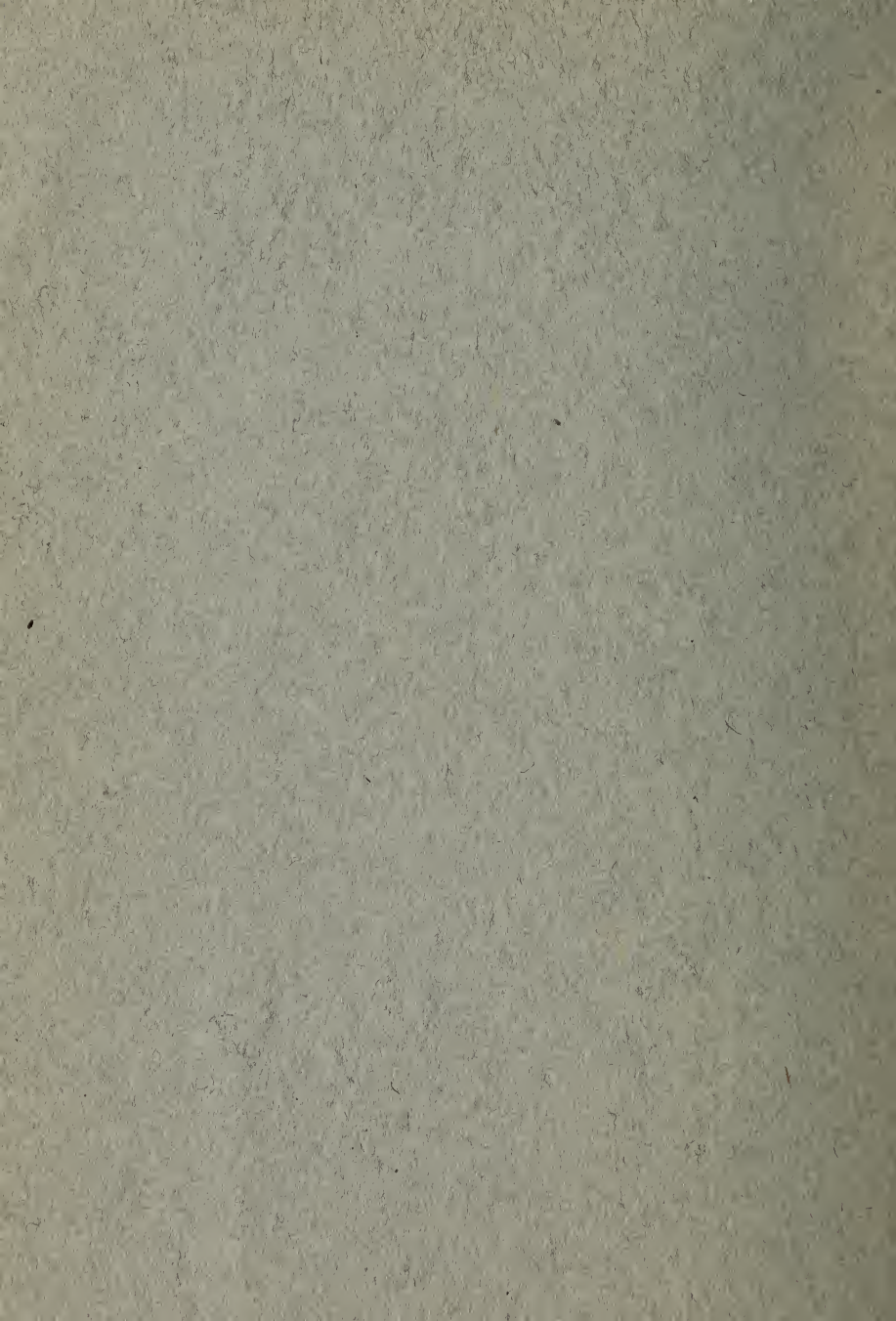
Medical School Centennial 1820-1920



Brunswick, Maine

Entered as second-class matter, June 28, 1907, at Brunswick, Maine
under Act of Congress of July 16, 1894


PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE COLLEGE



Addresses
at the
Centennial Exercises
of the
Bowdoin Medical School
June 23, 1920



Brunswick, Maine
1920



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

The Bowdoin Medical School

by

Kenneth Charles Morton Sills

President of the College

The maintenance of the Bowdoin Medical School for one hundred years has been one of the great services which the College has performed for the State of Maine; and it is appropriate in many ways that the centennial of the Medical School and of the State should coincide. You are shortly to hear the history of the School from one far better informed than I; and I shall only detain you for a short time with some very general considerations. It would indeed be pleasant to dwell on some of the early anecdotes of the School; or to go with you to some country district and see a Bowdoin Dr. Lavender upon his rounds; or to visit the cities of our State and enumerate the physicians of distinction and of influence who have been graduates of the School. It is, I know, customary at centennials to speak glowingly of those who have been leaders and in places of authority; and today is crowded with memories of men like President Allen and Dr. Nathan Smith, the founders of the School, Parker Cleaveland, Dr. Theodore H. Jewett, Dr. Stephen H. Weeks, Dr. Israel T. Dana, the dean and beloved physician Dr. Alfred Mitchell—and “one whom living we salute” Dr. Frederic H. Gerrish. But we must think also of those who labored and served in quiet places and in inconspicuous but faithful ways..

The School has graduated 2,121 physicians; and has taught more than 1,450 others who obtained here a large part of their medical training. These facts I mention so that we shall not forget the service the School has rendered.

But today we ought not simply to look backwards. If the School is to survive and to hold its place of usefulness in the future, it must have far more than it has now, the support, financial as well as sympathetic, of the people of Maine. No profession marches forward with quicker steps than does medicine. What was competent instruction in one generation becomes old-fashioned in the next. Facilities and equipment that seemed adequate and generous in 1890 are out of date in 1920. The evolution of medical education is clearly shown in the history of this School. At first the course was only a few weeks, just a series of lectures given in one year; then it was extended to cover two years; then to three; and finally to four. Likewise the requirements for admission increased until now no one can enter the School without two years of previous college training. The School has also reflected the advance in medical science by its physical surroundings. The School had temporary quarters for forty-two years in Massachusetts Hall. In 1862 it moved into more adequate quarters in Adams Hall. Then later the two upper classes went to Portland; the building there was erected and the Mason Dispensary added. It is a far cry from the annual lectures delivered in Massachusetts Hall in 1820 to the facilities offered today.

And yet so great have been the advances in medical education that the facilities we have today are still

inadequate. This is, I think, an appropriate occasion to inform the people of Maine of the needs of the School. We ought to have an additional endowment of at least \$500,000 so that the School may have several teachers who can give their full time to their teaching and to research. The suggestion of the Council on Medical Education is that every medical school should have at least eight full time professors and four full time instructors. When our staff is strengthened in this way there will be need of new laboratories, and laboratories are expensive to equip and to maintain. The relations of the School to the various hospitals in Portland should be still more close; and the work at the Mason Dispensary which has been admirably carried on of late should be still further developed. In fact all along the line efforts should be made to keep the School fully abreast of the times. If we stand still, we perish.

No doubt this looks like a formidable programme, but it is at least a programme worthy of the traditions of the School and of Bowdoin College. So long as the Bowdoin Medical School lives, we are bound to maintain high standards and it is our duty to plan at least for the next generation. The people of the State of Maine who one hundred years ago through the Legislature entrusted the Medical School to the "control, superintendence, and direction of the President and Trustees of Bowdoin College" ought to know that the School properly supported is ready and able to continue its good work and to progress; but that without generous financial assistance it is badly hampered and may not even survive. As in the College, money is necessary for instruction and for equipment. Medical

education is highly technical and scientific, and consequently very costly. But the investment will bring in large returns if the School is conducted on sound lines and in a progressive spirit. And therefore on this centennial celebration I call on all who are interested in the cause of medicine in Maine to ponder seriously these questions:

Do we need a medical school in the State?

If the answer is affirmative, ought we not to put this medical school on a firm basis so that those who teach and those who study here may be assured of adequate facilities, kept in touch with all the movements of progressive medical education, trained so thoroughly and so well that graduates of the School in the future as in the past may go forth to their great life work ready to take their places unafraid by the side of their brothers from the larger schools?

If the funds for that are forthcoming, the College will gladly continue its trust; but we shall not maintain a school that is not first rate.

So much for the future. But I cannot conclude these remarks without bringing to the School and its friends here the hearty congratulations of the College on a hundred years of work well done; and the thanks of the College to those devoted men who have served on the Medical Faculty.

The Bowdoin Medical School

by

Addison Sanford Thayer

Dean of the School

In *Morituri Salutamus*, first spoken in this church fifty years after the graduation of his class from Bowdoin College, Longfellow pays loving tribute to the men by whom he had been taught:—

“They are no longer here; they are all gone
Into the land of shadows,—all save one.
Honor and reverence, and the good repute
That follows faithful service as its fruit,
Be unto him, whom living we salute.”

Professor Packard, of the class of 1816, one of six brothers, all of whom were students at Bowdoin, whose wife was a daughter of President Appleton of the College and a sister of the wife of President Franklin Pierce; of whose five sons four were graduates of Bowdoin, three were college professors, two were teachers in our medical school, and one a practitioner of medicine in the nearest city; Professor Packard, who carried on the enterprise undertaken by Nehemiah Cleaveland, and gave us a History of Bowdoin College;—Professor Packard it was, for more than sixty years, who courteously received, from many a returning graduate, a salutation less immortally articulate than that of the beloved poet.

When Longfellow came back to Brunswick to greet his classmates and the world, he visited the grave of Parker Cleaveland.

In somewhat the sense that Plymouth Rock stands as the accepted token of civic and religious adventure, or that Mount Vernon remains the shrine of pilgrims whose thoughts go back to the beginnings of disenfranchised America, so Massachusetts Hall may fairly be taken as a fulcrum around which revolve affectionate memories of Bowdoin men; and perhaps there exists no material thing that more effectively radiates the beauty of Bowdoin spirit than that autograph sonnet which hangs on one of the walls of Massachusetts Hall,—the sonnet to Parker Cleaveland, written by Longfellow in 1875.

We are trying today to think the thoughts of one hundred years ago. Can we do better than let the poet guide?

“Among the many lives that I have known,
None I remember more serene and sweet,
More rounded in itself and more complete,
Than his, who lies beneath this funeral stone.

These pines, that murmur in low monotone,
These walks frequented by scholastic feet,
Were all his world; but in this calm retreat
For him the Teacher’s chair became a throne.

With fond affection memory loves to dwell
On the old days, when his example made
A pastime of the toil of tongue and pen;
And now, amid the groves he loved so well

That naught could lure him from their grateful shade,
He sleeps, but wakes elsewhere, for God hath said, Amen!”

A grand-daughter of Parker Cleaveland, through the kind intervention of Mr. John Chapman, has recently presented to the College a packet of 38 folded manuscripts, as uniform in appearance as a row of Philadelphia houses, all in the handwriting of Parker Cleaveland,—copies of annual reports from the Medical Faculty to the Boards of Bowdoin College, beginning with a report for 1820-21 and ending with a report for 1856.

In the vaults of the College Library are two precious volumes of records of the Faculty of the Bowdoin Medical School. From September, 1820, to July 1858, these records, also, are all in the clear handwriting of Parker Cleaveland. He qualifies as follows: "Oct. 25, 1820. *Voted*: that a secretary be chosen. On examining the ballots, it appears that P. Cleaveland is chosen."

From the pages of this record shines out, now and then, the religious spirit of our fathers. After the first session of the Medical School, rules were adopted. I quote two.

"Every member of this School is required habitually to attend public worship, and to be governed by such laws of Bowdoin College as relate to the observance of the Sabbath."

"All profane language and intemperance, the playing of cards and every form of gambling, and the frequenting of taverns for the purpose of drinking, are strictly prohibited. Any medical student who shall violate this or the preceding regulation [the one relating to the Sabbath], or shall be concerned with a college student in any irregularity and disorder, shall be liable to be expelled."

The record shows also that, in rare instances, a student was made to discover that the letter of these laws was not dependably dead:—

“Whereas it is known to this Faculty that a member of the medical class was, at the commencement of the present course of lectures concerned in scenes of great disorder and intemperance in a public house, concerning which he was conversed with by some of the Professors, and whereas the said [student] was, on the night preceding the annual Fast Day, found in the college yard at a late hour, with his face disguised by some black substance, and under circumstances leading to a strong suspicion that he was connected with some college students in certain irregularities attempted on that night,—therefore, Voted, that said [student] cannot be admitted to an examination for the degree of M.D. the present year.” And he wasn’t.

These sporadic lapses into “great intemperance at a tavern” may have inspired in fellow students a certain type of research; for the records show that, in those days, favorite subjects for graduation-theses were “De Delirio Trementi” and “De Mania a Potu.” On the other hand, as early as 1848, a candidate for M.D. at Bowdoin presented a thesis with the blameless title “De Aqua.”

In 1820, a considerable proportion of the people in Northern New England who received medical attendance when sick, received it from some doctor who was doctor by courtesy and not by diploma.

Many of these farmer-doctors or parson-doctors, who would be rated as quacks today, were wise and kindly and useful men. Some of them had attended

a course or two of medical lectures, perhaps at Philadelphia or at Boston; but for the most part they had learned their trade by "studying with a doctor,"—which frequently meant keeping the doctor's saddle-bags filled with favorite medicines and currying the doctor's horses. Nathan Smith himself, founder of the medical schools at Dartmouth and at Bowdoin, and chief ornament of the new medical school at Yale, had practised medicine for several years with no diploma. He saw the limitations of haphazard knowledge, and he builded something better.

At the time when the people of the District of Maine were awakening to a realization of the fact that they had become sovereigns of a state, Bowdoin College, in turn, was adjusting herself to the dispensation of a young and energetic president. In May, 1820, there arrived in Brunswick a vehicle of unprecedented splendor,—a carriage drawn by two horses, bringing to the college town the new president, William Allen, and his opulent wife. Madam Allen had been born the only child of the venerated second president of Dartmouth, John Wheelock. To the privilege of close relations with college presidents, was added the gift of personal charm. The period from 1820 to 1828, the year of Madam Allen's death, was an era of prosperity for Bowdoin College.

At Dartmouth College, President Allen had known the great surgeon and medical teacher, Nathan Smith. Doctor Smith's first enterprise, the founding of the Dartmouth Medical School, had been made possible by the friendly aid of Madam Allen's father, President Wheelock. Far more promising were conditions in Maine,—to wit, a manifest need for trained doctors, a

new State and a new legislature, friendly, by reason of changed relations, toward Bowdoin College; and, in addition, a new president blessed by the willing co-operation of a professor of medicine having prestige and great experience.

On the twenty-seventh day of June, 1820, the legislature of the newly-created State of Maine, passed an act entitled "*An Act to Establish a Medical School in This State*. There shall be established under the control, superintendence, and direction of the President and Trustees and Overseers of Bowdoin College, three distinct courses of lectures, embracing Anatomy and Surgery, the Theory and Practice of Medicine, and Chemistry and Materia Medica."

Early in the following year, the lectures were delivered by Nathan Smith, Parker Cleaveland, and John Doane Wells; and, at the close of the course, the degree of Doctor of Medicine was conferred upon two students. In 1822, sixteen students received diplomas. In 1829, the number who graduated was forty-six. Without interruption, for a full century the Bowdoin Medical School has performed its functions; and for the one-hundred years the average number of students who have received degrees at graduation, has been a fraction larger than twenty-one.

Nathan Smith was in his sixtieth year when he began his work in the Bowdoin Medical School. The success of this undertaking is ascribed in considerable part to the zeal of a young man of twenty-two, whom Dr. Smith selected as his prosector. John Doane Wells had graduated from the academic and medical departments of Harvard, and had served as an appren-

tice to Dr. George C. Shattuck. Brilliant work, as assistant to Dr. Smith at Bowdoin, brought prompt promotion. In order to qualify as Lecturer on Anatomy, Dr. Wells spent, in Europe, the greater part of the two following years and the greater part of \$2,500, appropriated by the new State of Maine. He purchased equipment for the museum and books for the library. Says Dr. Bardeen, of the University of Wisconsin:—"The great success as a lecturer of John Doane Wells served to establish a high reputation for the school at Brunswick. He became the most popular lecturer on Anatomy in New England." After eight years, tuberculosis brought this notable service to a close. The old records of Parker Cleaveland fairly glow with words of appreciation. Of Doctor Wells, his colleagues say:—"Such a brilliant and rapid career in his profession, we think, is unexampled in this country. As his life was unstained with vices, so were his professional instructions uncontaminated by erroneous philosophy." Lest this should prejudice posterity too much, they add:—"To his successors he has left the splendor of his example." Samuel Longfellow, in his biography, speaks of the useful letters which Henry Longfellow took to Paris,—introductions from John Doane Wells.

Two other names shine out brilliantly in the century's roll of teachers. Fordyce Barker was a graduate of both the academic and the medical departments of Bowdoin. He was made Doctor of Laws, not only by his own college, but also by the universities of Columbia, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Bologna. There are still living not a few former Bowdoin students,—medical and even non-medical and unbidden,—who re-

call with enthusiasm the vivid lectures and the fascinating surgical clinics of William Warren Greene.

We who are here today have witnessed in part the service,—in each case efficiently prolonged for more than forty years,—of two teachers, justly and highly honored,—Alfred Mitchell; and Frederic Henry Gerrish, “whom living we salute.” We are glad that recognition has come from associations and institutions of learning to the editor of Gerrish’s *Anatomy*; that some of his prophetic visions have become enacted into history. The School of his love and his labor rejoices to do him honor.

Doctor Mitchell used to say that, in the earlier days, his chair at Bowdoin was a three-legged stool. Nathan Smith, to quote from Oliver Wendell Holmes, occupied, not a chair, but a whole settee. The down-sittings and up-risings of the ancient medical lecturer have become relatively unimportant, in the advance of laboratory and bedside teaching; and pedagogical gyrations are now less premeditated. But, in more ways than one, the minister’s traditional barrel of sermons once had its analogue in a “course” of medical lectures. Not only successive classes in a single school, but also congregations in widely separated schools, had to listen and take notes. John Delamater of Ohio, who lectured in the Bowdoin Medical School during three separate periods, lectured also in nine different medical schools on seven different subjects. Of the professors who have taught at Bowdoin, Corydon L. Ford lectured acceptably in six different schools; Edmund R. Peaslee in seven; Alonzo B. Palmer in four; Fordyce Barker in three; William Warren Greene in

four; William Sweetser in four; Charles A. Lee in eight.

Into the land of shadows also have gone memories of medical teachers of local service and repute. Across the river, in Topsham, lived and labored James McKeen, son of the first President of Bowdoin; in Freeport, Ebenezer Wells. Amos Nourse practised statesmanship in the United States Senate, and obstetrics in Bath, Maine. After him came Theodore H. Jewett, whose service as lecturer was brief, but whose life as a country doctor in Maine furnished a background for the charming stories of his daughter, an honorary graduate of Bowdoin. Descendents of Isaac Lincoln and of John Dunlap Lincoln are still neighbors and friends of Bowdoin. In our School, the name Hunt stands for clear-cut, incisive teaching from father, brother, and son. Stephen Holmes Weeks and Franklin Clement Robinson are names not soon forgotten. W. C. Robinson, Conant, Childs, Amory, King, Mussey, Cobb, Dwight, Carmichael, Robey, Ring, and Wilder are shadowy only as all names become shadowy. In Doctor Israel Dana, New England piety and Gallic politesse harmoniously blended.

The mantle of Parker Cleaveland, as Professor of Chemistry and Secretary of the Medical Faculty, fell upon the shoulders of Paul A. Chadbourne, afterwards President of Williams College. To Professor Chadbourne we are indebted in large measure for the planning and construction of Adams Hall, in 1862. Up to that time, Massachusetts Hall had been the home of the School. Later, there was need for many habitations. Chemistry, histology, and embryology overflowed into the Searles Science Building. With the

new century of the Christian era came a vital change. Since 1900, instruction in the last two years of the lengthened curriculum has been given in Portland. Clinical teaching had become a necessity.

For laboratory and didactic use, Bowdoin College came into possession of a new building together with land for future expansion proximate to the hospitals of Bramhall Hill. Amid the dwellings of the poor of Portland, generous friends have erected and given to the College a substantial dispensary. Federal, state, municipal, religious, and private institutions have opened their doors to help in the training of future doctors. The City of Portland, Maine, has a splendid future; above the grade of high school, her only educational enterprise is a half-interest in the Bowdoin Medical School.

Excepting the temporarily useful Portland School for Medical Instruction, and the worse-than-useless Druidic University and its dubious appanage, our School has been the only medical school in Maine, and was often called *The Medical School of Maine*. Almost to the beginning of the present century, all American medical schools were commercial. To escape this stigma, university affiliations have been made or strengthened. President Hyde strengthened ours, and the governing boards began to govern. Following the example of James Bowdoin Winthrop, we have kept to the name Bowdoin,—a highly valued inheritance.

It is only in recent years that material inheritances and benefactions have come to schools of medicine. Commercial medical schools, of the type which is now disappearing, neither deserved nor received endowment. The generous gift of Mrs. Garcelon, bestowed

jointly upon the academic and the medical departments of the College, in memory of husband and brother, both graduates of the Bowdoin Medical School, came at a time when the need was great. The Hasty bequest, prompted by interest in the struggles of students, will presently yield returns. Other gifts are coming.

We have reviewed the story of our habitations and our name; we have lingered perhaps too long and lovingly over record, tradition, and memory of teachers who are gone. What of the more than three thousand taught,—those of us who have escaped expulsion for Sabbath-breaking or intemperance? We who are now to be classed as “old grads,” have need to be modest and have motive to be kind toward the young men who are graduating now. We heard lectures; they are taught to see and hear and feel and think. These are days of individualism and of democracy,—thank God!

The reports that have been coming to us concerning the quality of service in the world war rendered by graduates of the Bowdoin Medical School, the successful careers which are apparently assured among those for whom we have vouched, and the loyal words that reach us from young alumni at just the present time, might tend to make us dangerously proud.

A few weeks ago, the Federation of State Examining Boards published its annual report, showing that, in six different States, twenty-five of our graduates were examined for license to practise, with no failures. A few days ago, we made the welcome discovery that each of the twenty members of our entering class, at the close of his first year, has satisfied by examina-

tion the requirements of each one of his,—we believe,— not too lenient instructors. Neither our school nor any other school may point to a past nor hope for a future of perfection ; but we may properly be cheered by the knowledge that our graduates and our freshmen have joined in celebrating our Centennial year by records that are clean.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 105553603